DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 302 633 CE 051 542

TITLE	Establishing a Personal Guidance Base in Two Colleges.
INSTITUTION	Further Education Unit, London (England).
PUB DATE	88
NOTE	53p.; For the 1983 report, see ED 228 447.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Ancillary School Services; Career Education; *Career Guidance; Colleges; Counseling Services; Developed Nations; Foreign Countries; Guidance Programs; *Post High School Guidance; Postsecondary Education; *Program Development; *School Counseling
IDENTIFIERS	Great Britain

ABSTRACT

The two reports in this publication describe attempts to establish personal guidance bases (PGB) in two further education (FE) colleges in Great Britain. Each report relates how the colleges used the model set forth in an earlier publication, "Towards a Personal Guidance Base," published in 1983, which elaborated the idea of a PGB, and adopted a multiagency, multisite model of operation. The first of the two reports, "The Development of a Personal Guidance Base at Tameside College of Technology," describes a project to develop a guidance system within the college in line with some of the proposals in the 1983 publication. The second report, "Towards a Personal Guidance Base: A College Response," highlights how Cassio College in Watford used the ideas in the 1983 document as a basis for a review of guidance services in the college. It states that the aims of the project were to formulate and implement an action plan for a new college advisory service and to describe some of the organizational implications. The reports describe candidly the difficulties encountered in developing guidance systems and some strategies for a successful implementation of the ideas in "Towards a Personal Guidance Base." Both reports indicate that establishing a system of guidance in a college is not an easy task, but that it is both feasible and worthwhile. (YLB)

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FOREWORD

FEU has continually stressed that guidance should be an integral part of education and training. It should be a part of both the curriculum provided in educational institutions and the support infrastructure provided by local authorities. Guidance has been characterised as being concerned with assisting individuals to:

- assess their potential;

- identify appropriate opportunities;

- increase their awareness of self and others;

- become progressively responsible for their own lives.

The process of guidance has relevance for everyone regardless of ability, vocational status/aspiration, or personal circumstance. Previous FEU work has explored various aspects of guidance. *Tutoring* (Longman for FEU, 1982), a staff development manual which describes the techniques involved in tutoring, elaborated on the components of guidance and suggested that, together, they constitute a generic helping activity which aims to promote self-reliance. Another manual, *Developing Tutoring Skills* (Longman for FEU, 1985), explored the ideas contained in *Tutoring* through a workshop-based staff development programme. *Towards a Personal Guidance Base* (FEU, 1983) focused on the organisation and provision of guidance, and explored the possibilities of bringing together the services of the wide variety of agencies and individuals likely to be involved in the guidance process - for example careers officers, youth workers, teachers.

The concept of a Personal Guidance Base (PGB) had first been suggested by Levy (YOP Survey, FEU/West Midlands Regional Council for Further Education, 1980) as a five-part model:

- a basic location which young people could visit when they needed help;

- continuity of provision to enable young people to return;

- focus on learning and progression;

- delivered through inter-agency collaboration;

- with FE as an essential partner in the process.

These ideas were elaborated for FEU by Miller, Taylor and Watts in *Towards a Personal Guidance Base* in which a PGB was seen as a process by which a person is helped to take responsibility for her/his life, and which is provided in identified place(s) through collaboration of relevant agencies. The recommendation was that each person should have a place to go when in need of help and that a 'key' agency should take particular responsibility for each individual client. The report concluded that:

> 'Guidance is offered to young people by a wide variety of agencies and individuals.... This diversity can enrich the range of information and help on which young people can draw. But it can also be a source of confusion, duplication and competition.... It was to harmonise the structure of such guidance provision, and to ensure that young people needing help do not "fall through the net", that the concept of a Personal Guidance Base was evolved.'

Following the publication of *Towards a Personal Guidance Base* there was considerable interest in developing guidance systems in FE. This publication comprises the reports of FEU research projects which describe attempts to establish guidance bases in two FE colleges. Both colleges adopted a multi-agency, multi-site model of operation, but in other respects the approaches differed.

Work at Tameside College of Technology began in 1984 as a part of the FEU Experiential College Project. This generic project is summarised in *Experiential Colleges: An Introduction* (FEU, 1986). The aim of this part of the project was to develop a guidance system within the college in line with some of the proposals in *Towards a Personal Guidance Base*.

Cassio College in Watford used the ideas in *Towards a Personal Guidance Base* as the basis for a review of guidance services in the college in 1986. The aim was to formulate and implement an action plan for a new college advisory service, and to describe some of the organisational implications.

Both reports indicate that establishing a system of guidance in a college is not an easy task, but that it is both feasible and worthwhile. Guidance must compete for resources alongside other college services, and considerable determination and commitment is needed on the part of those responsible for its provision. However, FEU believes that guidance is an essential element of the quality assurance process within FE, and an important mechanism for measuring the effectivness of college provision. Guidance should be seen as a central, not peripheral, college activity.

This report describes (honestly) the difficulties encountered in developing guidance systems and some strategies for successful implementation of the ideas contained in *Towards a Personal Guidance Base*. The reports are summarised in a bulletin, *Personal Guidance Bases* (FEU, May 1988). Copies of the bulletin and additional copies of this report may be obtained from FEU.

Stuart McCoy
Development Officer, FEU

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PERSONAL GUIDANCE BASE AT TAMESIDE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Aims and objectives

The major objective of this element of the Experimental College Project was to establish a Personal Guidance Base (PGB) within the college, bringing together the work of three aspects of provision - personal counselling, educational advice and careers guidance. The concept of a Personal Guidance Base (PGB) was developed by the FEU in the project report *Towards a Personal Guidance Base* (March 1983). The report presented a number of possible models for a PGB and an initial aim was to explore these with a view to adapting one of them to meet the needs of students within Tameside College. The aim of developing a PGB was to provide support in the widest sense to the whole student body.

Student support services within Tameside College had been developed to some extent prior to the Experimental College Project, but the project provided the opportunity to build on and improve these. The services available included a careers advice and guidance service provided by the local authority, a student counselling service based on the main college site, a community-based educational advice service developed by the college's Adult Education department, and careers provision in the General Studies department. The staff involved worked independent of each other and had separate structures for support and accountability. The existing services within the college influenced the choice of PGB model.

A further influencing factor was the existance of other services available as part of student support, such as medical services, chaplaincy service, legal advice and help with accommodation. It was important that the project did not detract from existing services and efforts needed to be made to adapt existing guidelines to suit the particular needs of Tameside College students. The fact that Tameside College has five main sites also influenced the choice of model. A single-site model could not easily provide all students with the necessary services, so some form of compromise had to be explored.

The existance of the three services prior to the project presented a number of benefits. The expertise was already available; management were aware of the need for such provision and space had been made available. However, a number of difficulties also presented themselves. Staff had been working in their own area and some reluctance to change was anticipated.

The establishment of a PGB entailed a hugh shift in attitudes on the part of the staff, from working independently to seeing themselves as part of a large network of people with differing skills. Thus major aims were to devise a mechanism to draw the three areas together and to work out a perspective which encompassed the aims of all. This involved the creation of a single identity (which did not imply total amalgamation of the services) and the developing of a spirit of co-operation rather than of merely supporting ones own area of involvement. These aims were to prove critical in the implementation of a PGB.

The FEU report *Towards a Personal Guidance Base* suggests some basic aims that were built into this project. These aims are:

- that each student should be informed about the variety of people available inside and outside the college to provide guidance in each of the three areas - vocational, educational and personal;

- that each student should have a key person to whom to go when he/she wants help but is uncertain where to seek it;

- that this key person should routinely follow up each student at regular intervals (at least once a term) to find out whether he/she wants help;

- that efforts should be made to ensure that all the adults involved in offering guidance in and around the college are aware of each other's strengths and limitations, so as to facilitate referral;

- that efforts should be made to encourage co-operation, co-ordination and cross-fertilisation between adults involved in offering guidance in and around college, not least because this will foster communication at a deeper level;

- that such efforts should include a focus on negotiation, reviewing and progression in learning, possibly leading - at the levels of co-ordination and cross-fertilisation - to the development of harmonised procedures and practices so as to ensure that these become central features of curriculum development in college.

It was necessary to adapt these aims to formulate a strategy suitable for Tameside College and to translate it into practical activities. A number of important factors emerged:

- There is a clear need for good publicity. Effective ways needed to be found to reach the diverse population of students.

- It was necessary to enlist the support of course tutors to provide key people as contact points for the students.

- Regular meetings and development work was needed amongst the personnel within each area to facilitate effective referral to different parts of the service.

It was recognised that some sort of centre of activity or base which was visible to the students was necessary to promote the services and to create a sense of identity for the PGB. However, it was initially unclear as to what form this might take. It would not have been reasonable to forfeit the established sites as they had definite advantages for students. It was also important to the staff involved to promote a caring environment in which students could be aided in solving their own difficulties. This was the corner stone of the work of student support services and was kept in mind when considering possible changes.

Further objectives related to the transferability of the project's findings to other colleges. Thus itwas important to record the process of establishing a PGB and to monitor the process enabling a later evaluation of its work. It was not envisaged that a perfect model or approach could be found, but rather that other colleges could learn from one college's experience and translate the findings into action in their own way.

The final consideration was the application of a college-based PGB to a community-based PGB. Consideration needed to be given to the role that a college could play in such a community-based project.

The overall objectives within this part of the Experimental College project were to develop and establish a Personal Guidance Base by:

- considering the models offered by the FEU;
- adopting one to suit the needs of this particular college;
- considering the factors making a PGB desirable;
- finding workable solutions to difficulties encountered in the structure of existing services;
- working towards a change in attitudes among staff in the caring services;
- developing a single identity and perspective for the three agencies involved;
- enlisting the support of course tutors;
- developing co-operation and cross fertilisation of staff involved;
- publicising the services to all students;
- developing regular meetings and liaison amongst staff;
- protecting and enhancing the caring environment of Tameside College's student services.

<u>The process of development</u>

The provision available to students in the Autumn term to the beginning of the project consisted of three separate and distinct services (see figure 1).

The Student Support Service

This service was run by the Student Counsellor and the College Nurse. It was established in September 1983 although developments in the counselling area had been taking place for approximately a year prior to this. The service was fortunate in being able to secure a suite of three small rooms in the foyer of the main site, consisting of a reception area, counselling room and medical room. This provided visibility for the service and access to a great many students. It was decided that the service would adopt a low profile until such time as it was accepted as a natural part of college life and thus publicity was initially limited. There was no formal counselling provision on any of the other sites within the college.

The Educational Advice Service

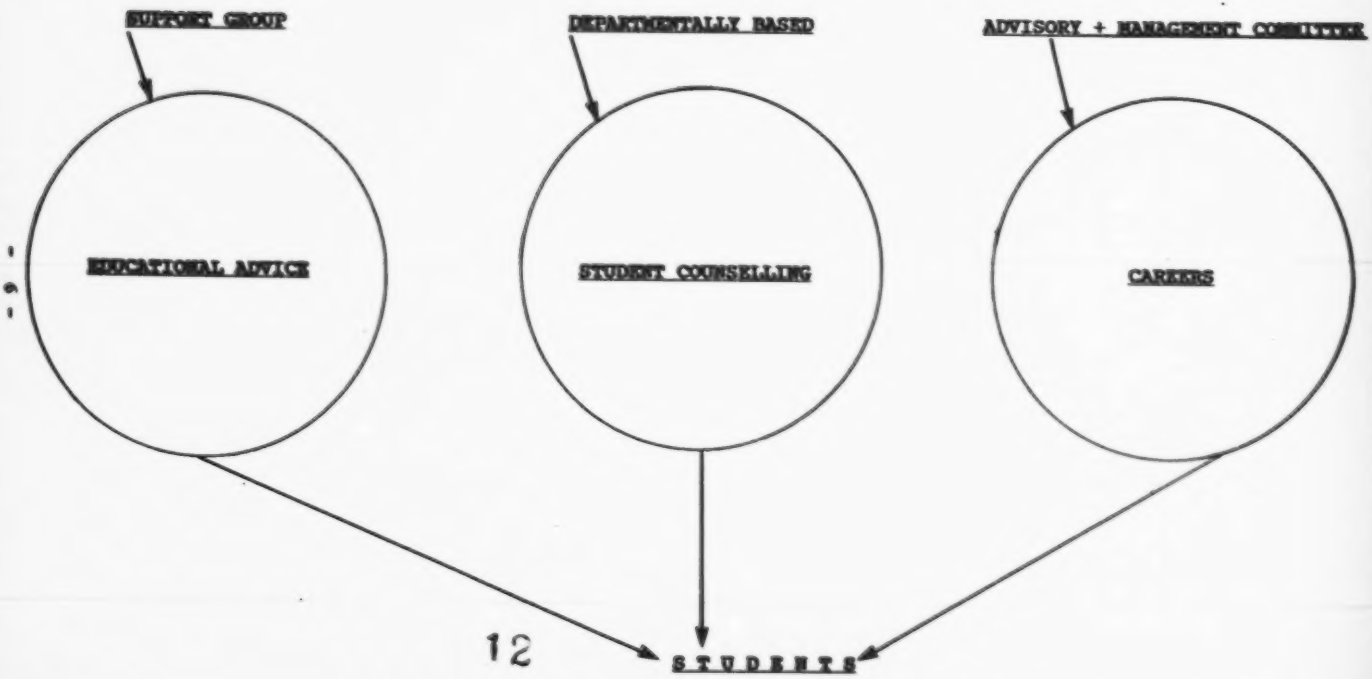
This service was based in the Community Education Centre run by the college. This centre is four miles from the main site and the service operated with little reference to the students on mainstream courses since its primary aim was to meet the needs of the adults in the community.

The Careers Service

The careers provision within the college was largely confined to the General Studies department. This department had a Careers Tutor who liaised with the Local Authority Careers Officer responsible for the college. The amount of time alloocated to the college by the Careers Service was not sufficient to allow any real interaction with vocational students. The rationale in the past had been that vocational students had already effectively made their career choices and were not really candidates for a guidance or advice service. However, it is increasingly being recognised that this is not the case.

In an ideal situation it may be possible to carry through a project such as this in a pre-determined way. However, it is not always possible to do this when dealing with real situations and real people, so progress is often made in indirect ways. The most convenient means of achieving an end often presents itself

FIGURE 1: STUDENT SERVICES PRIOR TO THE PGB PROJECT



after the development has taken place. Because of this it is difficult to chart the progress of a project in a chronological way and it is more logical if each development is considered in turn.

The first task was to bring together all the staff involved in the various areas. This seemed simple but actually proved to be most difficult. There were some basic misunderstandings between the various staff and a good deal of uncertainty as to the implications of a project such as this.

In the first place the counselling service was very young and the Student Counsellor was also designated the PGB Co-ordinator. Staff in existing agencies might have feared that the PGB was some sort of threat to their independence. Much work was also needed to persuade people of the value of counselling in a further education establishment. Other difficulties lay between the Educational Advice Service and the Careers Service in the demarcation of their roles. Most of the difficulties related to a lack of communication so this was the first obstacle to overcome.

Merely calling a meeting of all the staff involved would have led to few developments. Contact was initially made by the PGB Co-ordinator on an individual basis. This lead to a series of informal meetings designed to allay fears and explain the project. Once this process was completed and some of the barriers removed, a formal support group was established. The first meeting of this group took place in June 1984. This time lag seems long in retrospect, but the process of explaining the nature of the project and persuading staff of its value laid the foundations for later success. Without the unanimous support of the staff involved, the project could not have continued.

The support group was designed not to involve merely those people directly responsible for the project but also others with specialist skills and knowledge or an overview of the college project. The members of the support group were:

- a member of staff responsible for educational advice provision;

- an educational advice worker;

- a member of staff based at the Union Street site, with a background in counselling;

- the Careers Teacher from the General Studies department;

- the Careers Officer from the local authority;

- a member of the FEU project steering committee with an overview of the PGB project.

The group was chaired by the head of the Student Support Service who is also the head of the Health and Childcare department. The original composition of the support group has remained basically the same throughout the project, with a few changes to account for changes in staff.

During the early meetings consideration was given to the choice of model suitable for a PGB in Tameside College. The first consideration was that there already were three agencies operating and it was impossible to consider a single agency model because the Careers Service lay outside the auspices of the college. Thus a multi-agency model had to be accepted. Furthermore, the Counselling Service and Educational Advice service were based on different sites and served different student populations. A single-site agency would not have served the diverse needs of their clientele. Thus, the format for the PGB was determined as a multi-site, multi-agency model (see figure 2).

Developments in careers provision

Careers provision, as stated previously, was extremely limited in the college as a whole, apart from specific provision in the General Studies department. Improvements in the area of careers guidance was to some extent out of the direct control of the college, being the responsibility of the local authority.

The local authority Careers Officer working with the college at the time was concerned about the limited provision available to vocational and part-time students and worked with the PGB

Co-ordinator to develop proposals for improving the service. The main proposals were:

- a drop-in session for students, to be held on the main site every week;

- careers involvement in an admissions team to ensure the suitability of courses for students;

- careers involvement in the student induction programme;

- at least one group talk to every full-time course;

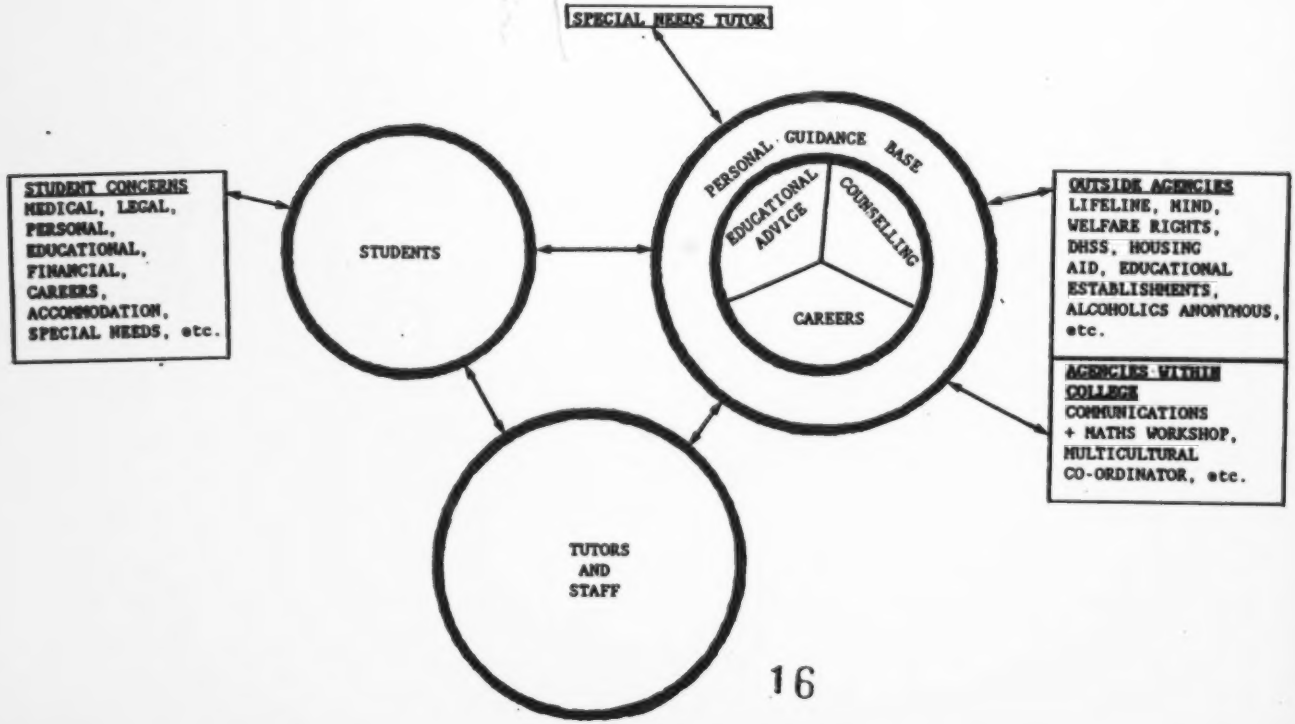
- follow-up talks and appointments available through the Student Support Service.

The drop-in session was implemented almost immediately and the initial response was promising. The Careers Officer also attempted to meet the needs of part-time students, but was extremely limited on time and the situation was far from perfect.

In the spring of 1984 a review of the careers provision in the local authority was announced. The college Vice-Principal and the PCE Co-ordinator met with the Senior Careers Officer from the local authority to discuss the needs of the college. The following September the Careers Officer responsible for the college provision left to take up another post and the vacancy was not filled while the careers review was in progress. It also became clear that any findings of the review would not be implemented for at least a further year.

Thus the outlook changed from one of optimism to one of pessimism. The PCE staff were very demoralised by the situation, particularly as the following term had been planned as a major development period. However, alternatives had to be found to fill the gap left in the Careers Service, at least in the interim period. Long-term proposals had to be discussed because there was always the possibility that the review would not turn out to be favourable to the college.

FIGURE 2: PERSONAL GUIDANCE BASE



The solution was particularly found in Educational Advice provision, but other initiatives were also undertaken. The General Studies department Careers Tutor undertook to see students from other departments where possible and worked alongside the Educational Advice staff involved in the PGB project.

There was a lack of centralised provision for careers material. Discussions with the college librarian resulted in the establishment of a larger central careers section based in the college library. Discussions also took place concerning alterations to the library to create a room which could be used for careers interviews and resources. The alterations were agreed in principle and it was hoped that these would have taken place during the summer of 1988, but unfortunately other work had to take precedence and the alterations were re-scheduled. Meanwhile careers material was being collated and stocks improved. The library staff agreed to organise the ordering of careers material centrally and distribute it to the appropriate people, thus further improving links between the agencies. They also instigated a Study Skills programme for students and referrals were made from the PGB to this service.

In September 1988 the careers review was completed and approved and it was finally possible to establish a comprehensive careers provision within the PGB. Four Careers Officers were each given some allocation of time to the college. The number of hours available varied with each officer, ranging from 1½ to ½ day per week.

Each Careers Officer is responsible for careers advice within a number of departments, and liaises with them on an individual basis. The Careers Officers provided group talks followed by individual interviews. The type of work undertaken included:

- job search techniques and alternatives to paid employment;

- opportunities in various occupational areas;

- the production of information sheets;

- a vacancy canvass of local and national employers.

The drop-in session has been re-introduced on Fridays in the Student Support Centre and is staffed on a rota basis. One Careers Officer has been made responsible for the two Hyde sites and is running her own clinic sessions on these sites.

Developments in educational advice provision

The Educational Advice Service was based at the Community Education Centre at Beeley Street in Hyde. It is essentially a community-based service which had been operating for 18 months at the beginning of the PGB project. The centre was staffed mainly by the Adult Education Department.

Early discussions between the PGB Co-ordinator and the educational advice staff raised a number of difficulties relating to the creation of a PGB. The main points raised were:

- The needs of 16- to 19-year-olds attracted to mainstream and YTS courses differ considerably from those of adults within the community who use the Educational Advice Service.

- Educational advice in further education would not necessarily provide for students before they enter college and must therefore include other elements such as information given in the classroom, the use of Course Tutors in an advisory capacity, the capacity to facilitate a change in direction for a particular student whose course does not prove suitable.

- The Educational Advice Service staff were initially reticent about becoming too closely identified with the other student services because they felt that their client group was very different.

- The adults using the Educational Advice Service lacked contact with other students services and ought to be offered additional help where necessary.

Despite these initial difficulties, positive proposals did emerge and it was encouraging that such reservations were being

discussed openly in the PGB Support Group meetings. Efforts were made by all the people involved to respect and support each other's areas of interest. It was important at this stage to draw upon areas and beliefs shared by the staff and not look for further divisions. All the staff believed in a client-centred approach and began to recognise the validity of each other's work.

The main developments in the Educational Advice Service to the PGB began when the college was left without official careers guidance provision. Staffing time was made available through the PGB Support Group for educational advice to be offered on the main site. Although it could not provide the same overview as careers advice, it was an extremely valuable stop-gap measure. The situation now is that educational advice is offered on two adult education sites and on the main college site at the Student Support Centre.

The type of educational advice offered differs a little on the two sites to account for differing client demands. The majority of the work taking place at the main site during term relates to students who have already had some contact with the college and wish to change direction or plan further courses of study.

The lack of educational advice during enrolment week was a serious concern. In response, the PGB Support Group organised an enquiry desk during enrolment in September 1985. This was a huge success with approximately 1,500 people making enquiries. That staff other than educational advice staff contributed to the service was visible proof of how far attitudes had changed and difficulties been overcome in the previous 18 months.

The use of PGB staffing hours for educational advice has now been extended to cover some time based in the local Jobcentre as a further attempt to reach out into the community.

Developments in student support services

The Student Support Service includes a wide range of services including personal counselling, first aid, medical advice, accommodation assistance, financial advice, legal and welfare

rights and the chaplaincy service. The service is staffed mainly by the college nurse and student counsellor and includes part-time support from a college doctor and chaplain. Many other people form a network of services and are co-ordinated by the student counsellor/PGB Co-ordinator.

The Student Support Centre is located in the main college building and provides easy access for students. The service at the main college site was established in its present form in September 1983. Little provision was available at the start of the project period on the other sites.

The Student Support Service is responsible through the Academic Board Sub-Committee for student support. A recommendation was put to this committee that some allocation of time should be made for the Union Street, Hyde, site. This was agreed and a part-time counsellor was appointed with responsibility for this location. The member of staff appointed was already teaching on the site so this arrangement proved very successful. The college counsellor also arranged to allocate some of her time to the Stockport Road, Hyde, site.

The adult education sites were still without any personal counselling service and had little access to the other services provided by the Student Support Service. Some time allocation was offered to rectify this; the Adult Education department discussed this at a staff meeting. The staff were reluctant to agree to any formal counselling provision. The main reason given was that informal personal counselling and guidance was an integral part of their work and, although some doubted the effectiveness of such a system, it was not felt to be appropriate to try to impose an alternative system without full agreement.

The result was that a compromise was reached whereby a member of the educational advice staff was identified as a contact point for Student Support Services. This was quite successful because the member of staff ran the Educational Advice Service at the main site and had regular contact with the counsellor. Any student requiring counselling was referred to the main site. Also, the discussion process had a useful side effect in that adult education staff seemed more aware of the Student Support

Service and began referring more students and collecting information to pass on themselves.

The support service has developed many links with other services in the community and within the college. This development took place in a number of ways:

- by the cross-fertilisation of information from one agency to another, such as meetings with the DHSS Housing Aid programme or the Welfare Rights Unit. Some of these discussions resulted in policy decisions such as the streamlining of the application of rules relating to disabled students and non-contributory invalidity pension, while others were merely useful exchanges of information and contacts.

- the forging of new links through the Experimental College Project and others such as multicultural education and Special Needs Co-ordinators. These links are valuable to a support network helping to provide a comprehensive range of facilities and advice to students. Referral from these staff is common and often the Student Counsellor and the co-ordinator of a particular area will undertake to help a particular student jointly, providing the student agrees.

- contacts made through other colleges and agencies. Links with counsellors in other areas have been established and this provides a useful channel for the exchange of information and ideas which can be explored within the PGB project.

At the beginning of the project this process was very much one-way, with the Student Support Service requesting and obtaining information and help from other agencies. However, it has now developed into a two-way process. Many agencies will refer their clients back to the Student Support Service if they are students of the college, and a much greater degree of co-operation and inter-linking has been achieved.

The Student Support Service provided the PGB with its most readily identifiable base. Much of the work of the service was concerned with staff development and publicity. Staff development provision was identified as an essential part of the

project and was recognised as a continuing process throughout the project period. The initiatives taken were of two types, the first concerned with staff development for staff working within the PGB and the second concerned with the training for staff throughout the college, especially those who undertook the role of course tutor.

Each agency within the PGB had its own methods and means of training. All areas of work had access to both regional and national courses and, in the case of personal counselling, in-service training is available in the college. Good staff training is vital in providing student services, but the PGB group had an additional aspect to consider - the development of good working relations between the agencies. This is difficult to develop on training courses and involves a longer and more subtle process.

The support group was the foundation of this aspect of staff development. Meetings took a number of forms. Some were policy making meetings, discussion strategies and new initiatives; others were working meetings involving the production of materials for an Enquire Within directory and other documents; many took the form of discussion groups. These were most valuable to the members; from these meetings a common picture of a Tameside College PGB began to form.

Staff development within the college

This area was important to the project's success in that, without the support of staff in the college, contact points or key people could not be established through the course tutor system and the network of referral would not succeed. Course tutors are often the first line of contact with the PGB and they need to know how the service operates and in what areas help can be given.

The PGB Support Group decided to integrate staff development work into other areas of staff training. The reasons for this was that if a series of special workshops were organised relating only to the PGB, the staff taking part in the exercise would probably already be sympathetic to the PGB objectives. The aim was to reach staff who had little understanding of the nature of

a PGB and needed to be persuaded of its relevance to a college of further education.

The first step in the staff-development process was to visit as many staff as possible and explain the project as fully as possible, giving plenty of opportunity for discussion. It was important to give staff time to voice any reservations and to dispel any myths that might arise. This process was carried out through departmental staff meetings. The student counsellor visited all the departments in the first six months of the project. The results proved interesting and gave the PGB Support Group ideas for further developments.

It became clear that people understood the role of the Careers and Educational Advice Services but were unsure of the role of the Student Support Service, in particular the function of personal counselling. Counselling ideas can be difficult to accept when people are used to 'advice giving'. Other staff development courses and seminars provided the opportunity for an input on the Student Support Service.

Once implemented, a programme of continual updating began. This involved an input on the induction programmes for all new staff entering college. This was not merely information giving, but involved simulations of common concerns of students and resulted in an understanding of how best to cope with a variety of difficulties. Staff were then able to make better decisions as to when and in what circumstances to refer students, and to what extent they felt able to be involved with student concerns. Once staff knew of the agencies and how best to use them, acceptance followed. Staff would make approaches to the service and, depending on the response to their needs, would reach their own conclusions as to the validity of the service. This good practices had to be maintained at all times.

Certain areas of particular difficulty were identified by the PGB Co-ordinator and steps were taken to equip staff in helping with these areas. Welfare rights difficulties and the growing provision of 21-hour rule courses were creating a great many enquiries. Information sheets were published and two seminars organised for staff wishing to gain more information. The

response was favourable and many staff can now be used to refer other staff to with specific queries. For example, one member of staff is now fully informed on a particular aspect of DHSS regulations, and staff in her department can sort out minor difficulties with her. Similarly, the tutor responsible for developing provision for the Adult Unemployed also now has a wider understanding of legislation affecting her students.

Through discussions in the PGB Support Group it was found that, although Educational Advice was available, many students were not being directed to the service and were sometimes enrolling on unsuitable courses. The group became aware that many potential students were also failing to obtain correct information concerning the area of study they wished to pursue, particularly during busy periods such as enrolment weeks.

The solution seemed to lie with better information for all staff, both academic and administrative, so that:

- potential students could be guided to the right departments;

- staff would be more aware of courses in other departments;

- where students were unsure of which course to follow they could be directed effectively and quickly to the Educational Advice Service.

To this end a directory, Enquire Within, was devised. The directory had an easily recognisable cover and contained all the necessary information in one place. An updating system has been devised to try to ensure that it remains accurate.

Information dissemination

Publicising the PGB was considered extremely important by the PGB Support Group, but only after it had been effectively established. Although major publicity initiatives were delayed, they have been operating over the past year; some of the staff development initiatives provided opportunities for publicising services in the beginning of the project.

The policy on publicity was to advertise in as many outlets as possible and not to rely only on material produced for the PGB or agencies independently. In this way it was hoped that a wider audience would be reached. The publications containing information on the services include:

- *The College News*, a regular internal publication mentioning all new events, changes in session times and expansions of the services.

- *The Students Handbook*, produced by the Students' Union and distributed to all full-time students.

- The *Do you Need Help* booklet, a Student Support Service publication of useful contacts covering a full spectrum of agencies in the locality. The PGB services are incorporated in it.

- The *Enquire Within* directory which relates mainly to educational advice information but includes contacts for the PGB and other agencies in the college. This is continually updated to ensure its continued value as a directory of current provision.

- Material sent to new students prior to starting college to ensure that services can be made use of even before students enter college.

Distribution can pose difficulties once material has been produced. The material for students is either sent through the post or distributed during the induction programme. The *Enquire Within* directory was distributed by hand by the PGB staff. This meant that they had the opportunity of explaining it to users. Fifty copies of the directory were originally produced, but requests for further copies are now being received. The departmental secretaries, receptionists, and general office staff have at least one copy each. Senior management, heads of departments, and people with cross-college roles have also been given copies. A list of holders is kept so that PGB staff can contact them to update directories when necessary. A member of staff has been allocated time to update them regularly.

Distribution in this manner is fairly effective, and certainly better than merely sending them out through the internal mailing system.

There already existed a standard poster design for the Student Support Service prior to the project; this was used to advertise PGB services and provided a unified image for the services. It was hoped that students would instantly recognise it as a source of information about services available to them.

The PGB Co-ordinator visits groups of students during the first term of the academic year and holds induction meetings on three sites. This is followed up by visits to smaller groups arranged with Course Tutors. The range of groups is extremely wide and includes 'O' level, CPVE, engineering and MNEB students and many more. Special efforts are made to contact students who would not normally be involved in the induction programmes, including those enrolled on courses for the unemployed and part-time students. Increasingly, courses are starting at all times throughout the year and special efforts must continually be made to ensure that students are made aware of services available to them. Course Tutors have proved eager to invite PGB staff to their classes which is probably the most effective way of reaching students.

A programme of extra-curricular events known as the 'SPACE' programme was designed to help students become more effective in dealing with their own lives by providing information about their rights as young adults, discussing ways to influence decisions which affect their lives and ways in which they can make life more fulfilling, for example through community involvement. A useful by-product of this programme has been the dissemination of information on PGB services as the Student Support Service organise the events. It also provides opportunities for staff from different fields to work together. For example, one event was organised on Equal Opportunities and involved co-ordinators from three areas (Special Needs Co-ordinator, Multicultural Education Co-ordinator, and Equal Opportunities for Women Co-ordinator) as well as the PGB Co-ordinator.

The general aim of information dissemination has been to make both staff and students aware of the existence of student

services and where they can be found. The specific details are often not remembered and are not vital, providing the referral system is effective. For example, if a student arrives at an educational advice session and is also having difficulties at home, s/he will be referred to the Counselling Service in a caring and understanding way.

Evaluation and review

The PGB Support Group was able to undertake the monitoring of the project as part of its responsibilities. This was carried out through regular meetings. The group discussed the direction of the project and assessed the implementation and success of each particular initiative. Regular reports were made from the PGB Support Group to the Experimental College Steering Group.

The Student Support Services Sub-Committee of the Academic Board is responsible for Student Services as a whole and has provided an overview of the PGB as part of the total college services.

Detailed records are kept of all students visiting the PGB and, although confidential, provide a valuable source of statistical information for the project. Termly statistics of numbers of enquiries and areas of concern, such as accommodation or emotional concerns, are produced and considered by the Academic Board of the college and the College Management Team. Other information has been gathered through questionnaires and meetings with staff and students.

The material collected in monitoring the project has also provided information to aid the process of evaluation. In addition, questionnaires were circulated to all staff in an attempt to measure their attitudes to the PGB and the use made by them of PGB services for their students. Other questionnaires have focused directly on students and their perception of the PGB. These include individual evaluation forms for completion by students at the end of their course and, in a slightly different form, by students who leave their courses prematurely. The PGB services are often used as a source of help in the latter cases. Questionnaires have also been used with the adult unemployed in the college to obtain information as to whether the PGB meets their needs.

The college has taken the opportunity to be involved in both regional and national surveys of support services and this has provided information for comparative evaluation. By the various means available, it is possible to undertake an evaluation in both quantative and qualitative ways.

The PGB Support Group has also played an important role in the evaluation process.

Throughout the project the original aims (listed on pages 2 and 3) provided a yardstick for measuring progress. It may be useful to take each point in turn and consider the questions raised by it.

- *Has each student been informed of the variety of people available, inside and outside the college, to provide him/her with guidance?*
  In this field the Tameside College project appears to have been very effective. Publicity has been given a high priority. In the survey of teaching staff, only 4% of tutors were not aware of the PGB services. More than 90% of the staff heard of services either through the *College News*, talks to staff by PGB representatives, or from colleagues. Posters seemed the least effective way of reaching people. The efforts made to reach students also seem to have been effective. The emphasis on personal contact is important. Students would rather speak to someone they have seen, even if only at a distance, rather than contact a service they have only read about. This is supported by students using the services. When asked how they came to the PGB, the majority remember one of the talks. Pick-up is high after meetings when information is fresh in students' minds. The only further action which could be taken would be to remind students, returning for a second or third year, of the PGB and its services. There is some evidence that students 'forget' about services available to them.

- *Has every student identified a key person they can turn to if they are unsure where to seek help?*
  The evidence suggests that course tutors have now taken this on board and are actively working towards a caring role. The number of clients referred by course tutors continues to grow,

particularly within the Student Support Service. The number was very small when the service began, but accounts for approximately 50% of students visits at the present time. A survey undertaken at the end of the second year of the project showed that, of the tutors replying, 25% would normally refer students to the service, 6% would obtain the advice or information themselves and 64% would do both these, depending on the circumstances of the student concerned. This implies that tutors are keen to work with PGB staff and do not absolve themselves of responsibility once they have referred a student.

- *Do these key people routinely follow up students to see if they need any help?*

Tutorial time is available on all courses and, increasingly, personal interviews are being incorporated into tutorial work. In the Counselling Service, discussions with course tutors explaining a student's particular concern indicate that the concern was picked up in a tutorial. Staff are often asked by their students to come along for the introductory interview.

- *What efforts have been made to make sure staff involved in the various agencies are aware of each others' strengths and weaknesses?*

The PGB group would have listed this objective first as it had a very high priority within the Tameside College project. Without this, all other initiatives would be of little value. To measure this objective is, however, extremely difficult, but certain events point to success in this area.

At certain times during the past year, examples of such referrals can be found in the records. There is no agency that has not referred students to another on occasion. However, there is less referral between Educational Advice and Careers Services than between others. This is probably due to the overlap in their areas of work. The network of referrals extend beyond the PGB agencies to others, co-ordinators in college such as the Multicultural Co-ordinator, and the Literacy and Numeracy Workshop organiser.

- *Is co-operation, co-ordination and cross-fertilisation taking place among the staff involved in the agencies?*
  Again it is only possible to draw conclusions from practices that have developed. Staff from the different agencies work together on different sites each week, at some time, and regular discussions - both formal and informal - take place. The subjects discussed cover a wide range of topics, from exchanging contacts in a particular area to planning new developments.

- *Have harmonised procedures and practices developed?*
  There are a number of examples of such practice within the college, in particular the *Enquire Within* directory and the central appointment system at the Beaufort Road main site. The educational advice desk organised during the enrolment week is a further example. This initiative involved staff from all the agencies, enabling all educational advice queries to be dealt with speedily and effectively, and will certainly become an established practice in future years.

Lessons to be learned from the project

The approach adopted by the PGB allowed different members of the team to arrange their services in their own way. For example, in record keeping, length of appointments and the degree of formality and flexibility can be maintained while still maintaining continuity of service. The Tameside PGB provides at least one central contact point for staff and students, although it may be more convenient for them to visit a different site. It is not essential that students enter the system from a central point, they may seek guidance through any of the agencies' bases. This again brings a degree of flexibility.

A further strength in the Tameside College model is the involvement of a medical service - the survey shows the extent of usage of this service. It is invaluable to the other services as it is a safe and acceptable way to begin the process of requesting help. Students often come to the student support rooms with non-specific medical ailments and, once they feel safe, request other forms of help. The fact that a nurse is always present also provides an element of security, particularly for those making the

transition from school to college.

One of the major drawbacks in this project has been the uncertainty of financial support for some of the services. The Educational Advice Service has survived from one year to the next mainly on external funding. This contributes to a great deal of unease on the part of staff and can be demotivating. Similarly, the Careers Service provision to the college was totally withdrawn at one point, which was extremely disappointing to PGB staff. It seemed at one stage that just as one area was working well another would be threatened. It was sometimes felt that the three services would never exist simultaneously. External factors had a major part to play in the success or failure of the project. Only the Student Support Service had stability throughout the project as it was funded entirely by the college. Staff therefore had the confidence to plan ahead. A major recommendation to any college contemplating a project such as this would be to ensure adequate and reliable funding prior to the project.

With hindsight it can be seen that there were factors which could have smoothed the progress of the project. There would have been great benefit in the development of a policy statement outlining the long-term plans and prospects for student services. A second factor was the time available for discussion, preparation and planning prior to starting a project. More time would have been a great advantage in the PGB project. Such a policy would also enable a project to gain momentum more quickly. In the case of the PGB, it was extremely difficult at first to bring people together to work for common objectives and in the same direction. Staff often had to give up their own time to attend meetings, and sometimes chose not to give the PGB priority. This caused many difficulties in decision making. A commitment to the principles of such a project is essential.

Support from other areas of the Experimental College project was often very valuable. The Multicultural Education Project overlapped the PGB project in a number of ways, and the Study Skills Project writer also worked closely with PGB staff. There was room for improvement in relation to staff development. The PGB group felt that more joint initiatives could have been

undertaken and would have benefited from some help with in-service training of PGB members.

The application to a community-based PGB

Some of the lessons learned during this project have equal application to a community-based PGB, but there are a number of additional points to be made. For example, the Educational Advice Service has made progress in attempting to meet the needs of the community and valuable lessons can be learned from their experience. However, the college's PGB provides a comprehensive service including accommodation advice and a medical service. These are traditionally the realm of the local authority and would not be appropriate to a local PGB. Visibility has been a key factor in the success of this project and would also be in the case of a community-based PGB. It would be best placed in the high street or an easily accessible centre. Whether people would actually come into a college of further education for help would depend very much on the image of the college within the community. Increasingly, adults are entering further education establishments not only on traditional adult education courses but also on mainstream courses. Thus a college needs to be able to respond to their needs.

Plans for the future

At the end of a project such as this, it was helpful to sit back and assess the impact of the initiatives in as broad a context as possible. Two years of activity is quite a long time and close involvement with a project can hinder an overall perspective. So discussions and consultations had to take place to formulate a strategy for the next few years. The PGB Support Group continued to meet; it had no intention of allowing the developments that had taken place to lapse through lack of interest. The group will however be re-formed in the new year to account for changes in personnel and emphasis and may possibly incorporate other agencies not previously involved in the project. Some improvement in the management structure may prove useful as often there is no single body responsible for taking decisions and the co-ordinator found it frustrating on occasions having to deal with too great a variety of college committees.

In general terms, this aspect of the Experimental College project has been successful. The staff concerned are pleased to have been involved in the project, and student services in Tameside College have definitely improved as a result of it. This can only benefit our students in the long term.

TOWARDS A PERSONAL GUIDANCE BASE: A COLLEGE RESPONSE

Project aims

The aims of this project were:

- to document a college response to the publication of Towards a Personal Guidance Base (FEU, 1983);
- to examine ways in which the FEU document provides a model for revision of support services to establish an effective personal, educational and vocational guidance service;
- to review the process of establishing an integrated personal guidance unit throughout the college and consider the implications.

Background

Cassio College is one of two major further education establishments in Watford, serving South West Hertfordshire which has a population of approximately 200,000. The college provides education and training for a wide range of service industries, general education, youth and community work, and adult education.

The college is a Group 6 further education institution serving mainly South West Hertfordshire, but for certain other work a much wider catchment area. The main campus, developed since 1968, is in pleasant grounds on the northern side of Watford. There are three older annexes nearer to the town centre which serve as operational centres maintaining large adult education and youth/community programmes throughout South West Hertfordshire.

The college has five academic departments:

Academic and Social Studies	Grade V
Adult Studies and Home Economics	Grade V
Business and Secretarial Studies	Grade V
Food Industries	Grade IV

Retail Distribution and Services	Grade III

and three non-teaching departments:

Library and Information Services	Grade III
Youth and Community Service	Grade III
Administration and Maintenance	Headed by the Chief Administrative Officer

The college was actively examining its role and provision in the light of changing demands upon it. Increasingly, staff were involved with new initiatives in many sections of the college, often calling for much cross-departmental co-operation (e.g. PICKUP, Open Learning, YTS, CPVE, GCSE, updating of City and Guilds syllabuses in Catering and Reception, development of various student-centred learning strategies, community education). The College Advisory Service provided comprehensive support to individual students in particular need and to the student body in general.

Response to the publication of 'Towards a Personal Guidance Base'

For some years Cassio College had had a many-pronged approach to student support services. The Youth and Community Service Department had always been integrated into the college departmental structure, providing youth workers to run recreational facilities on campus as well as throughout South West Hertfordshire Education Division. A Further Education Advisory Service was set up in 1966 to deal with vocational guidance not only within the college but throughout the area to members of the public who were looking for new directions. A counsellor was appointed in 1967. This post was at L2 level, as was the Further Education Advisor, and carried six hours' teaching commitment. These services were running alongside those provided by some departments, but not all, through time-tabled 'tutorial' sessions aimed at pastoral care of students.

By 1983, when *Towards a Personal Guidance Base* (J Miller, B Taylor and A Watts, FEU, 1983) first arrived in Cassio College, these services were well established. The specialist services were operating more or less independently and, though calling themselves the College Advisory Service, had little sense of corporate identity. The Vice-Principal sent copies of the document to the three sections of the service, asking for a response. At a subsequent meeting, on 27 June 1983, it was agreed to set up a group calling itself the 'Personal Guidance Base Working Party' (PGB) which would consist of the Vice-Principal, the Head of Department of Youth and Community Services, all full-time members of the College Advisory Service, and one person representing each department in college. So began a series of meetings at which we could begin to examine need as well as co-ordinate provision.

At our first meeting in the new academic year it was agreed to circulate a brief one-page summary of *Towards a Personal Guidance Base* to all members of staff. A decision was also taken to survey all full-time members of staff - some 130 at the time - and a 10% sample of students. All heads of departments were also asked to make a separate response. Only one head of department returned the questionnaire, along with 30 members of staff. The response rate from the student population was about 70%. A brief summary of the findings follows:

The response from the student sample were:

Academic and Social Studies	27
Adult Studies and Home Economics	8
Business and Secretarial Studies	21
Food Industries	20
Retail Distribution and Services	9

There were 23 males and 61 females. One person did not specify. This distribution was reasonable for our college population, though Academic and Social Studies students were a little over represented. Of these students, nine did not know that an Advisory Service existed in college, 16 said that no time was allocated for guidance and counselling on their time-tables, and 21 did not wish there to be. The latter were mostly males. By

far the greater majority, some 90% of students, found their tutors very approachable and preferred to take their troubles to them. Careers headed the list of problems that they were looking for help with; accommodation came a close second and academic work third. When asked what they looked for in a counsellor, the picture given was of someone friendly, trustworthy and a good listener.

As 24 of the 30 respondents to the staff questionnaire said they had some formal responsibility for guidance and counselling, and half were allocated time for these duties, it would be wrong to assume that this was an unbiased sample. The picture it gives, however, is not dissimilar to the relevant section of *Curriculum-led Institutional Development* (RP116, FEU, NICEC) which was reporting concurrently. Results can be summarised under five main headings.

Availability — The service was seen to have a lack of open access which mean that students frequently had to make appointments.

Approachability — Students found the 'formal' counselling service difficult to approach. There was a need for additional 'informal' workers.

Presentation — Much more information about the service was needed by both students and staff. The service was seen as 'distant'.

Development — More effort should be put by the service into staff development, enabling tutorial staff to be more effective in their work.

Support — Most tutors felt they got the support they needed in dealing with student problems. 2% said they approached their head of department and 42% that they would go to the College Advisory Service. The remainder did not specify.

By the summer of 1984 it had become evident that:

- the status of the tutor and the tutorial role varied throughout the college;

- there was no overall college policy on guidance and counselling;

- the provision for students varied across the college;

- the College Advisory Service (CAS) was not seen as having any part in the overall education of students;

- CAS was seen as uncoordinated and peripheral;

- CAS was seen as having an important role to play;

- CAS was seen as being overloaded. (What a relief to find that that was not just phantasy!)

As a result of these findings, three forms of action were taken:

- a series of meetings was initiated with tutors who carried pastoral responsibility;

- a new member of staff was appointed (in September 1984) to work with students in the common-room;

- an introductory course in counselling was mounted in the spring of 1985.

A group from North London College, which was twinning with Cassio College to carry out the enquiry embodied in RP116, 'Curriculum-led Institutional Development', said in their report:

> 'There is a clear case for the Personal Guidance Base working group to be invited to formulate an integrated college-wide counselling/guidance policy statement ... and demonstrate where the Personal Guidance Base/Student Support Service best fits into the college organisation.'

In line with this recommendation, a policy statement was formulated and presented to the Academic Board. Its acceptance brought with it a request that PGB should prepare a detailed proposal outlining possible future developments for CAS and examining the resource implications. This document was produced and accepted in principle in May 1985. Its aim was to provided an integrated service under one single manager who should be a member of the college Senior Management Team and thus directly responsible to the Principal. This person should be accountable for the development of the service - both its staff and resources - and for keeping open clear lines of communication between the service and senior management.

PGB has been recognised by the Academic Board and continues to act as a consultative group whereby new initiatives from CAS and others, in matters concerning support services for both staff and students, can be moderated and monitored through discussion and representation back to departmental meetings.

A model for revision of support services

Towards a Personal Guidance Base makes a clear analysis of the needs of young people and shows the importance of providing a structured pathway through the multiplicity of delivery points they encounter in order that they may experience a progression of learning rather than feel they are being tossed from pillar to post. In its summary it says:

> 'Guidance is offered to young people by a wide variety of agencies and individuals ...
>
> This diversity can enrich the range of information and help on which young people can draw. But it can also be a source of confusion, duplication and competition.
>
> It was to harmonise the structure of such guidance provision, and to ensure that young people needing help do not "fall through the net", that the concept of a Personal Guidance Base was evolved.'

Those who read these words at Cassio College in 1983 recognised their validity and recognised too how easily they could identify with that picture - a multiplicity of agencies with too many students 'falling through the net'.

Four models are developed in the document and all concern the number of agencies responsible for providing guidance and counselling and the number of locations at which this provision is delivered.

Strategy A has one agency delivering at one outlet;
Strategy B has one agency delivering at many outlets;
Strategy C has many agencies delivering at one outlet;
Strategy D has many agencies deliverying at many outlets.

The situation at Cassio College clearly fitted Strategy D - responsibility was divided and locations were widespread. The aim was to move towards Strategy B where responsibility is gathered under one agency - CAS - while leaving the widespread availability which we, and more importantly the students, valued.

Cassio College had opted to work towards an autonomous unit under the umbrella of which all the counselling and guidance in the college should be able to gather (Strategy B). The recommendations were:

- the service should not be located in separate departments but gathered together under one member of the Senior Management Team;

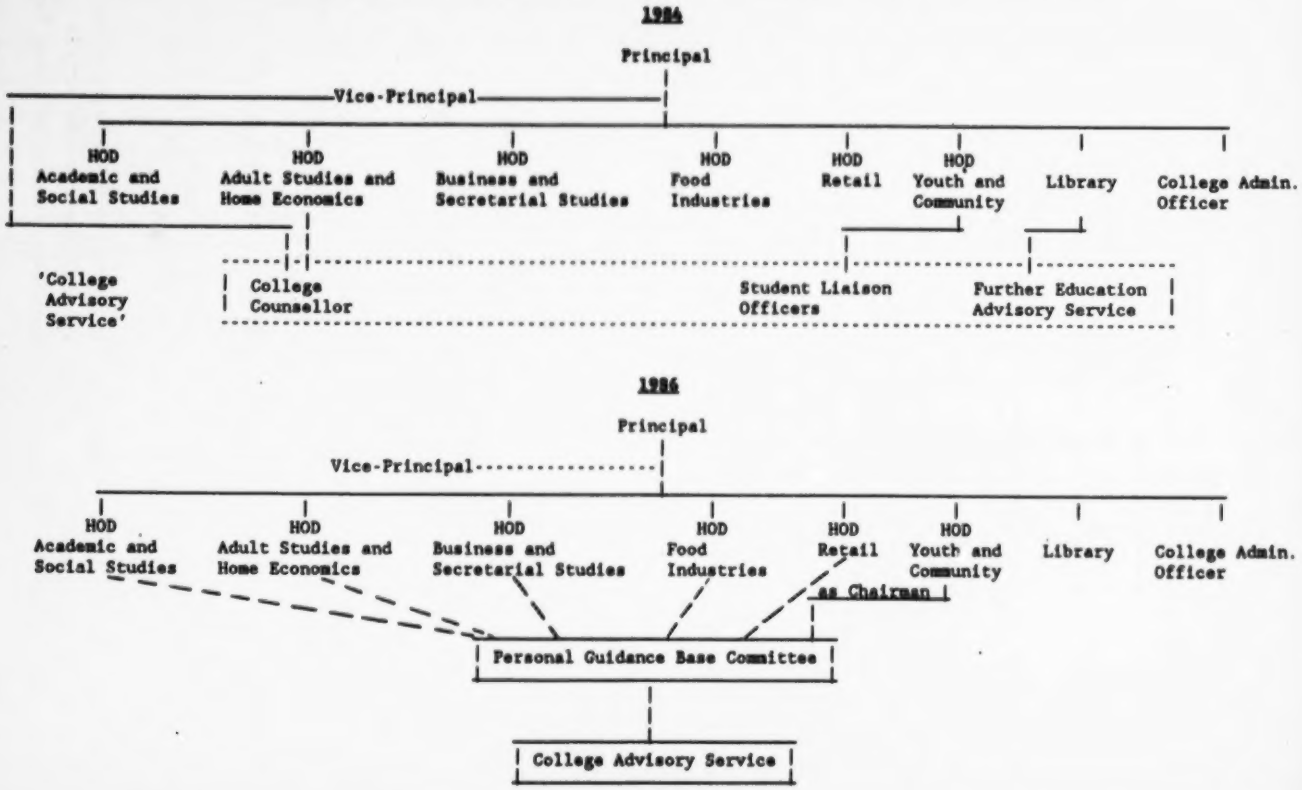
- this service should be represented on all college committees;

- there should be a balanced provision of guidance and counselling throughout the college;

- specialist advice should be available both to individuals and departments;

- adequate support and supervision should be provided for all involved in guidance and counselling;

FIGURE 3: THE PLACE OF THE COLLEGE ADVISORY SERVICE IN COLLEGE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



- training opportunities should be available for all who wish to benefit from them;

- provision should be extended by working alongside other agencies in the college such as the Mid-tech Organiser, the YTS Co-ordinator, the Open University and all the tutors engaged in adult studies on different sites.

These structural changes are set out overleaf.

Tameside College, starting from a not dissimilar base, though in their case vocational guidance was not integrated into the college, has provided an alternative model even though their aims appear to be very similar. Their first step on determining to set up a Personal Guidance Base was to appoint a co-ordinator. This person set about contacting all the staff involved on a personal basis; only after considerable consultation was a formal support group established. Their priority seems to have been the establishment of projects - to integrate careers staff into the college, develop publicity and undertake staff development - rather than the setting up of systems. These projects were aimed not only at individual members of staff but also at systems of communication and information dissemination.

The attempt to extend personal counselling services, into adult education particularly, met with some resistance at Tameside.

> 'Staff were reluctant to agree to any formal counselling provision ....
>
> informal guidance and counselling was an integral part of their work ....
>
> it was not felt appropriate to impose an alternative system.'

However, discussion links were made which led to an increase of communication and clients from that department.

In this case a Personal Guidance Base seems to have been set up by increasing co-operation between specialists already active in the area, through meetings and communication - a hallmark of this

project - without directly involving members of academic staff, though much time was set aside for individual discussion and attendance at staff meetings to 'dispel any myths' about the group that was emerging. The co-ordinating role appears to be just that and no attempt has been made to centralise management and alter college structures.

A telephone survey around Hertfordshire told us that only two of the colleges had heard of *Towards a Personal Guidance Base*. We decided to visit the one geographically nearest to us, not only for that reason but because the college was undergoing a major re-organisation. Dacorum College, Hemel Hempstead, has around 85 full-time members of staff and 400 full-time students. Its present arrangements for guidance and counselling are:

- a Student Liaison Officer - a full-time appointment involving 10 hours' teaching;

- two youth workers employed each lunch-time;

- a counsellor appointed for nine hours a week;

- academic staff take responsibility for guidance concerning higher education.

Dacorum has recently re-organised its structure so that heads now occupy an across-college functional role rather than the more traditional position in an academic department. This move, coupled with a recommendation from HMI that the Student Services aspect of college life be looked at more closely, has prompted an examination of the provision.

It is hoped that the Student Liaison Officer will head the Student Services Group - one of the four main functional groups established - which will be a section in Student Affairs. The responsibilities will cover:

- general student welfare, information provision and liaison with group tutors, outside agencies and the student union;

- counselling of staff and students;

- provision of recreational facilities in the Youth Wing;

- careers liaison, co-ordination of work experience, higher education advice and vocational guidance.

This would appear to be a Strategy A structure.

Amersham and Hackney Colleges gave two similar but different models to explore. They are similar in that, as with Dacorum College at Hemel Hempstead, both have recently been restructured, and staff and student services have been a major feature in that restructuring though different in size and scale of provision.

Amersham College in Buckinghamshire had 90 teaching staff and 1040 full-time equivalent students. It consisted of three schools:

- Business and Industrial (much concerned with NAFE supported by MSC);

- Science and Humanities;

- Arts (runs a BTEC Highers course in Art and Design).

Added to these were two college-wide functional groups:

- planning resources;

- staff/student services.

The latter function had been set up under a senior lecturer whose main responsibility in the team was towards staff development. Also included were:

- an Educational Tutor (eight hours remission for this work);

- a Personal Counsellor (employed for six hours);

- two Student Liaison Officers.

The College Administration Officer was responsible for the employment of two part-time nurses (one full-time equivalent) who worked in very close contact with the team, particularly the counsellor.

The senior lecturer was directly responsible to the Vice-Principal and also sat on the Academic Board. The group felt very well supported by the senior management of the college, particularly the Principal who was committed to a 'caring college'.

These services were about to expand and be re-housed in purpose-built accommodation. The expansion was likely to:

- bring counselling hours up to 10 per week;

- include a new post in careers counselling at L1 level.

Staff development was a very high priority of this functional group and this aspect too was obviously well supported by senior management with the provision of a compulsory training hour every Friday between 3.30 and 4.30pm. The programme for this training was the concern of the staff/student support team and included a large element of counselling and guidance skills for pastoral tutors who ran weekly tutorial sessions with all students.

Hackney College is considerably bigger, with 3800 full-time equivalent students spread over ten sites. Three faculties were created:

- Building;

- Technology;

- Business and General;

plus a college-wide Central Services Board.

Central Services covered the Library and Technical Services as well as Staff Development and Student Services. It was headed by a Grade 4 Head of Department.

Along with these structural changes went changes in college policy which ensured that:

- course teams met regularly to discuss student progress;

- all students had a weekly tutorial hour.

The local authority allocated three Student Services Officers with counselling experience to the college who reported directly to the HOD Central Services. Though the main building was developing a central staff/student support area with offices and interview rooms, counselling offices were maintained on all sites; Student Service Officers took responsibility for three each. Liaison with tutorial staff was mainly through HOD Central Services and the Staff Development Officer.

The model that both these colleges approximate to is Strategy B - a centralised management function which administers and develops pastoral care through a multiplicity of outlets at a comfortably close level to both staff and students.

Visiting the Knowsley Project* at 'Centre 70' provided an opportunity to explore a local Personal Guidance Base rather than a college-based model and here the structure is much more clearly seen as a loose network of autonomous agencies - Strategy D.

The project comprises a large number of agencies in the Borough of Knowsley on the north-eastern edge of Liverpool. The motivation for its work springs from a common concern for the many unemployed people in the area. Centre 70 itself is part of an adult literacy scheme set up as 'outreach' from Kirby College of Further Education. Brenda Croughan, a lecturer from Kirby College, both runs the centre and co-ordinates the project. Involved too are members of the Careers Service, Marriage Guidance, CAB and many other organisations which aim to provide a support service in the community.

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* An FEU research project in Knowsley was completed in 1987 and the project report is to be published soon as *Face to Face*.

The models that have been described here have moved between Cassio College's centralised management (Strategy B) to Centre 70's loose and egalitarian network in the community (Strategy D). It is only possible to attempt an evaluation of the success of our own model and this we have undertaken by updating our survey of staff, using a 10% sample and the same questionnaire as in 1984.

Establishing an integrated PSE at Cassio College

Back in 1984 we established a plan and set out our objectives. We are still travelling. Anything but a subjective evaluation of the process we have been through and are still involved in would be less than honest. At best we can expose a few snapshots of our institution and set them alongside reflections from others and offer our observations and insights.

Updating the survey of our colleagues' perceptions of CAS and examining the position of pastoral care in the college has enabled us to highlight the changes. There is quite clearly an increased commitment to tutorial work throughout the college. Though it is still not accepted as overall policy, all departments but one now have a tutorial system with some time allocated each week to pastoral care. Most students therefore have a 'key worker', a 'first-in-line provider', to whom they can readily turn. There is real awareness of the value of tutorial work among tutors with a pastoral responsibility and many have set up programmes on personal development which have become joint ventures between tutorial staff and CAS. These include:

- induction to college;
- self-awareness groups;
- transition and stress;
- discussion on alcohol and other drugs;
- preparation for leaving home.

Consultation between all tutors and CAS has grown considerably and tutors report feelings of support both with group work and

the problems of individual students. Referral to CAS by tutors often follows consultation, though by far the greater part of the 2,000 calls made annually upon the service come from self-referral. There are still tutors who would like to opt out of the counselling role and, while this is open to them if they have not been given formal responsibility for it, many face a real professional dilemma. So often the role of a group or course tutor carrying pastoral responsibilities is seen as a step up the career ladder and therefore a position hard to refuse. It is, however, essential to recognise that some people are superb teachers and maybe organisers, but have no taste for others' personal difficulties.

What right have we to impose pastoral care on those who wish to confine their tutoring to course-related issues? In any case, all who are asked to undertake this role should be given the opportunity for some training in the skills required. There have been occasions when even a morning's training has reversed a previously held attitude.

CAS has not totally overcome the 'distant and busy' projection. It may, however, be significant that there is a new complaint arising from our colleagues - that we are not catering for the needs of evening class students. Using the Maslow model, it could be argued that this is a second and less pressing need which is only perceived when the more urgent one is satisfied. This is not said in any sense in self-satisfaction. If full-time students' needs are more frequently met it is due in part to the increased awareness of tutorial staff, the time they give to them, and in part to the extra resources that college as a whole has provided to increase the CAS team.

The earlier clear indication that CAS should be gathered together under one department has fragmented. The main response of our colleagues to questions relating to college structures was one of near terminal boredom and this for reasons that have nothing to do with CAS. In the original survey lack of time was seen as the major difficulty in carrying out guidance and counselling work. Lack of skills and pressures from the syllabus were given second place. Now, however, time pressures share equal first place with the lack of any proper room. It seems that, having gained

confidence in the role, our colleagues are no longer satisfied with a 'hole in the corner' approach. For CAS in Cassio this is currently an important issue. We have been negotiating for extra space not only for our own service but also for college-wide use. There is growing recognition that corners of classrooms and bends in corridors are not suitable environments to counsel distressed students.

The initial survey was summarised under five headings:

Availability — Greater integration and added staff has meant that open access has increased without loss to those needing appointments.

Approachability — This is no longer mentioned and we must assume that it is due to extra workers in common rooms, etc.

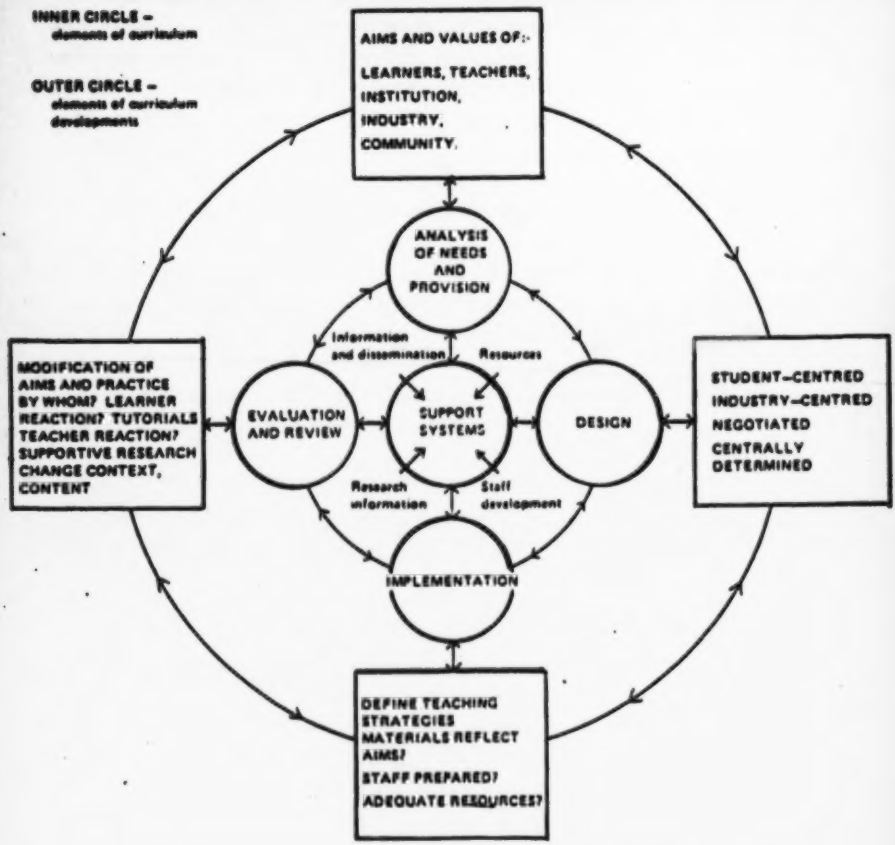
Presentation — Most colleagues now see CAS as an integrated team but are content that we should operate on a consultancy basis.

Development — Concern has shifted to wider issues of staff development and the question of the inclusion of a 'Professional Tutor' arose.

Support — This is increasingly seen in terms of consultation.

Updating this survey of our colleagues' perceptions of the CAS and examining the position of general pastoral care in college has enabled us to highlight the changes and ask some questions that still need to be addressed. One that had previously gone unnoticed concerns the role of non-teaching support staff. In *Staff Development for Support Staff in FE - Policy Statement* (PN/JWN, November 1983) attention is drawn to the importance of the guidance and counselling aspects of the role of all support systems and argues for 'planned programmes of experience and training for staff in posts related to changing job demands'. It develops a model, shown below, of the position of support systems in FE in relation to curriculum development.

Figure 4: Curriculum development model



Recognising our own position in this model, it encouraged us to search out the opinions of others who were similarly involved and so, by means of structured interviews of departmental secretaries, another snapshot was obtained. These ladies are all quite involved in advisory work, though almost half of them denied it! They frequently:

- discussed with prospective students, or with their parents, details and suitability of courses enabling decisions on application to be made;

- had their 'ears bent' by anxious parents, both before and after a student had registered for a course;

- spent time with students who needed an unofficial ear both on the telephone and in their offices:

'I sometimes sit and have a smoke with them.'

Strangely enough, they very seldom thought to refer either student or parent to CAS.

It is also interesting to note, in relation to the document quoted above, that the majority would have valued training in the early days of their employment, though most have been in posts long enough to have found ways of getting the information necessary to complement their work. For CAS there are two lessons to be learned:

- liaise more closely with departmental secretaries;

- examine our own contribution to and deficits resulting from poor channels of communication.

It would appear that, in an educational setting, there is no possibility of building a Personal Guidance Base from scratch. There is always some system of student support, however informal. In the NAFE Journal for November 1986 John Hughes writes, 'Teaching as an upfront activity occupies the lesser part of the day. And that is as it should be.' He postulates five elements of the teacher's role - research, administration, teaching, counselling and consultancy. 'Counselling and consultancy properly occupy a major proportion of our time.' For a PGB to develop successfully, any such commitment must be acknowledged and given due respect. The Tameside report quoted earlier clearly shows the importance of consultation in dealing with the anxieties that can so easily be aroused by change. In Cassio it had been hoped to achieve this measure of communication through the PGB working group, which was made up from representatives of all academic departments as well as the three full-time members of CAS. Hindsight shows that many more hours of talking with academic colleagues and reassuring on a personal level would have had to be done to follow our chosen route.

What actually happened in our push towards an integrated, college-wide service was that decisions and attempts to move forward were seen as being made by a very small group with no obvious authority, whether given from above or legitimised by peers. This had a somewhat stirring effect.

At a time when many other changes and uncertainties were about, it left us in a very exposed position and so we became a focus of discontent. I think at the time somebody had to be the scapegoat! Abrasion, however, can sometimes bring out the qualities of an object and there is little doubt that in this case action was galvanised in the direction of an examination of the tutorial role. The effect on CAS was to make it pull together and, of course, it had made itself obvious enough. It was not the way we had intended. The results, however, have been indicated by the survey and show a move forward from 1984.

- There is much close agreement across college on the role and status of the tutor with pastoral responsibility.

- A statement on policy concerning guidance and counselling has been agreed.

- The acceptable role of CAS has been widened and recognition has been given to the part that counselling has to play in the overall education of students.

- CAS is now seen as a co-ordinated team of workers with common and yet differing skills.

We claim this while recognising that during these same years there has been the development of the 'new FE' and the curriculum demands of CPVE. These have given clear indications that guidance and counselling are not only part of the tutor's role but an integral part of any course.

<u>Implications of the exercise</u>

Cassio College has not yet achieved the integrated service that we set out to achieve in 1984 - not by the means chosen. Amersham and Hackney have each made a contribution in that way.

We must turn to the model provided by Knowsley. It is a network of autonomous and equal supporting agencies, each recognising the value and contribution of the other. If networking is to be a more successful model than attempting to establish a centralised system, several conditions must be satisfied:

- Clear channels of communication must be formed and kept open.

- 'Key workers' must be acknowledged and their value affirmed.

- There must be a recognition of the difficulties that exist when a specialist service exists alongside a 'general practitioner'one*.

CAS at Cassio, although remaining disparate in organisational terms, now perceives itself and is perceived by others as a unified team. This has been achieved by mutal commitment to the value of co-operation. Sharing has brought tremendous benefits to both the team and its clients. The aim now must be to extend this to 'key workers' and then beyond to all colleagues who are concerned with student support.

The creation and development of such a network will need dynamic support and must be based on feelings of confidence and trust. The mutual respect of autonomous agencies that Knowsley has demonstrated and the sensitivity of Tameside must set our guidelines. Only in this way can we achieve our aim of a college-wide service. This should not be seen as a retrograde step but the positive outcome of testing reality in our own institution and learning from the experience of so many others.

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* Noonan, Ellen, *Counselling Young People*, Methuen, London 1983.